Project I.D. No. 150

NAME: 丸岡 Maruoka, Ryoko DATE OF BIRTH: Sep. 1895 PLACE OF BIRTH: Niigata
Age: 80 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: Aoyama Gakuin

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1920 Age: 25 M.S. P.B. Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. Treasurer of the 2. Shoemakers' Union 3. 2. Insurance agent
Place of residence: 1. San Francisco 2. ___ 3. (husband)
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Community organizations/activities: Officer of Japanese Assn. (husband)

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center: Tanforan
Name of relocation center: Topaz (Husband interned in Missouri)
Dispensation of property: Sold some, left some Names of bank/s: ___
Jobs held in camp: 1. Kitchen helper 2. ___
Jobs held outside of camp: ___
Left camp to go to: ___

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: Sept. 1945
Address/es: 1. ~~Hunter's Point~~ 2. San Francisco
3. ___
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Activities: 1. ___ 2. ___ 3. ___
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: ___

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 10/28/75 Place: San Francisco
Translator Mabel Hall

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in Niigata Prefecture.

Q: When were you born?

A: Sept. 15, 1895. I am 80 years old.

Q: Your name is?

A: Maruoka, Ryoko

Q: What was your maiden name?

A: It was Sato.

Q: There are not too many people from Niigata-ken, aren't there?

A: No, not too many.

Q: What was your father doing?

A: He was a school teacher. I was born in Niigata Prefecture, but my father was transfered to different schools. When we went to Oita Prefecture the surroundings was so good that we settled down there.

Q: Then were you brought up in Oita?

A: I was brought up in Niigata, and went to Oita after graduating from school.

Q: Was Mr. Maruoka from Oita Prefecture?

A: Yes, that's right.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: I have eleven altogether. Most of them are school teachers.

Q: How many sisters?

A: Eight girls and 3 boys.

Q: How many from the top were you?

A: I was the 4th.

Q: Did you have an older brother?

A: Yes, one older brothers and 2 older sister.

Q: Was your father a strict man?

A: He was a strict father. When he was about 25 and was a school teacher he wrote a book about women's etiquette. I think it was a pamphlet. I vaguely remember that it was a thin book. He believed that children should be educated, so he sent all of us to schools.

Q: Which school did you go to?

A: Aoyama Gakuin in Tokyo. My sister graduated from English Department of Aoyama Gakuin. My mother didn't like English, and told me not to study English, so I attended the sewing and handicraft department for 5 years.

Q: How many years schooling did you have altogether?

A: Five years.

Q: How many years did you go to grammar school?

A: Six years,

Q: Where did you go after that?

A: Aoyama Gakuin.

Q: Were there many women who had such high education in those days?

A: No, not too many. As my father was an educator he sent us to Tokyo.

T: I am surprised your father could send you to school with a teacher's salary.

A: Yes, indeed. In those days Aoyama Gukuin helped those who were not well-to-do.

Q: What was your father's religion?

A: Buddhism.

Q: Wasn't Aoyama Gakuin a Christian school?

A: Yes, it was a famous Christian school in Japan.

T: I am surprised he sent you to Aoyama Gakuen.

M: As he was an educator he must have thought that our knowlege would be widened if he sent us to Tokyo.

Q: Did you say he was a strict father?

A: He was gentle to his children. One of my sisters studied music at a music conservatory in Tokyo. Rest of the girs attended girls' highschools. One brother graduated from Waseda University and the other brother graduated from a higher normal school in Hiroshima. They are all educators.

Q: What kind of woman was your mother?

A: She was a real gentle mother.

T: It must be hard with so many children.

M: It was very hard. She was a great mother, but she did not like Christians.

Q: Why didn't she like Christians?

A: I remember when I was about 15 my mother told me that if we go to church and become Christians, we will be crucified when we die so don't become a Christian.

Q: Was there a church nearby?

A: Yes, there was a Sunday school held at my sister's friend's house. I never went there, but my sister did.

Q: What did you do when you went to Aoyama Gakuin?

A: While I was in Aoyama Gakuin, Yamamuro Gunpei of the Salvation

Army used to come and preached to us. Every time he preached he told us to believe in Jesus. I thought there was no use coming to a mission school if I don't become a Christian, so a year after I enrolled in the school I was baptized. At that time about 15 students were baptized moved by Yamamuro Gunpei's sermon.

Q: What did Yamamuro Gunpei say will happen if you don't become a Christian?

A: Every time he came he told us, "You are a sinner, you should repent and believe in Jesus." He preached us with such enthusiasm that I became a Christian. Before I was baptized I wrote a letter to my parents asking for their permission. My father wrote me an answer telling me to do whatever I think was right, so I was baptized right away.

Q: What kind of recollections do you have about your childhood?

A: There were many children in our family, but we never knew poverty. As my father was a teacher of normal schools and other higher schools he was regarded highly. We associated with father's friends, so we led lives too good for us. We did not know hardship when we were young.

Q: Did you have friends?

A: We were friends with teachers' children.

Q: Were you a good girl or a tomboy?

A: I hear I was high-spirited.

Q: Did you play with your brothers and sisters?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: What do you remember about your grade school days?

A: I had a carefree happy life when I was young. After I went to Aoyama Gakuin I had money sent from home, and I stayed in the dormitory for 5 years. I did not have any worries while I was in school.

Q: What did you enjoy in your schooldays in Aoyama?

A: I enjoyed everything.

Q: Did you like to study?

A: I didn't dislike it.

Q: Were you a good student?

A: It was written on my passport that I was an excellent student.

Q: Do you remember anything that happened in your village or in the country such as war, fire or tidal wave when you were young?

A: I don't remember anything like that.

Q: Did you study ethics at school?

A: I studied it at grammar school. Every morning the whole school gathered in the schoolground, and the principal gave us a talk.

Q: Do you remember what you learned in ethics such as respect your parents?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you think it was good that you learned it?

A: Yes, it was good to learn it and try to be a good person.

Q: Did you have that in Aoyama Gakuin?

A: At Aoyama Gakuin we studied Bible instead. Every morning we gathered in the chapel and had a worship service. Then we went to our own classroom and had Bible study.

Q: Did you enjoy school?

A: Yes, I was happy.

Q: What did you do after you graduated?

A: I taught at a girls' normal school in Okayama Prefecture. When I reported it to Aoyama Gakuin the teachers were happy because a graduate from a school managed by foreigners could get a job at a prefectural school which required an examination to become a teacher. I could get a teaching job there because of my father.

Q: Besides sewing did you study Bible at Aoyama Gakuin?

A: Of course I studied all the subjects you study in a college.

Q: Which school did you teach?

A: I taught Okayama Prefectural Girls' Normal School. I also taught a girls' highschool in Kurashiki.

Q: What did you teach?

A: I taught embroidery.

Q: How many years did you teach?

A: About 4 years.

Q: Do you have any recollection as a teacher?

A: The students in those days were very quiet. It is not like today. They respected their teachers. Those were happy days, except there was a teacher who didn't like Christians in the highschool in Kurashiki where I taught. He called me "yaso."

Q: Did he give you a hard time?

A: No, he didn't, but I did not go to church.

Q: Were there any trouble?

A: No, there wasn't because I kept quiet. We were fellow teachers so I just had to keep quiet.

Q: Was that teacher a man?

A: Yes, he was an old man.

Q: Have you ever punished any student?

A: No, I haven't.

Q: Have you ever scolded them?

A: No. Everybody knew I came from a mission school, so I was called a kind teacher. I owe it to the Bible.

Q: Weren't students attached to you then?

A: Yes.

Q: How did the marriage proposal come about?

A: My sister was married to my husband's brother. My parents told me that the younger brother of my sister's husband is in America so marry him. As I believed my parents were right I decided to marry him.

Q: Have you met your husband before?

A: No, I never met him. I heard about him through my sister's husband, and thought he was a fine person so I came here.

Q: Where did you have the wedding?

A: Here. I came here as a picture bride, and had a wedding at a Christian church.

Q: At which church did you have the wedding?

A: At my church. (Christ Presbyterian Church)

Q: When you were in Japan what kind of a country did you think America was?

A; A friend of mine was in America, so I came here without any worry. She was Rev. Yamaka's sister and my classmate at Aoyama.

Q: What kind of a country did you think America was before you came here?

A: I was beside myself. I thought I could never go back to Japan once I went to a foreign country.

Q: Did you think America was a nice country?

A: Yes, because one third of the teachers in Aoyama were Americans.

Q: What kind of a man did you think Mr. Maruoka was when you heard about him from your sister?

A: I trusted her, so I said I will go then, and we were engaged.

Q: What was he doing?

A: He was a chiropractor. After graduating from a highschool in Oakland he went to a chiropractic school and was working as a chiropractor. But after I came here he quit it.

Q: Why did he quit it?

A: I think he was not cut out for it.

T: Then he must have been fluent in English.

M: Yes, I wish I had learned English from him. In those days a Japanese who graduated from a highschool and became a chiropractor like my husband was very rare. He was a fine husband.

Q: Were you sad or happy when you left Japan?

A: I was not a bit happy. I was very sad.

Q: Did you come because your parents told you to come although you didn't want to come?

A: Not that I didn't want to come, but I came because I had to get married some day. As he was my sister's husband's brother I came here feeling at ease. However, there is nothing as painful as parting.

Q: Where did you leave from?

A: From Yokohama on Siberia-Maru.

Q: Did your father and mother see you off?

A: Mother didn't come. Father was a principal so he could not come, but my brothers and relations came to see me off. I do not cry much when someone dies because I know they went to Heaven when the time came, but parting is very painful for me.

Q: What did your parents tell you before you left Japan?

A: They told me to come back after 5 years. In those days 5 years seemed very long, so I said, "Of course I'll be back in 5 years."

Q: What did your father say?

A: He said, "Come back after five years."

Q: What did your mother say?

A: She said, "This is the parting forever" and saw me to the gate of our house.

Q: Did your parents give you any mementoes?

A: I don't think they gave me any. I remember that I slept with my mother the night before I left there. I think she could not sleep, but as I was young I was sound asleep. She shook me and said, "Are you still sleepy, Ryo?". I think she wanted to talk to me. I feel sad when I think about it.

Q: When did you come here, and how old were you then?

A: I came here in 1920 when I was 25 years old. After I had my own children I understood mother's love, and I regretted I slept. I think my mother could not sleep.

Q: How was it on board the ship?

A: There were many picture brides on board the ship, and I made friends with them. Some women were coming to marry men whom they did not know. As I was coming to marry my sister's husband's brother , and as he was a chiropractor, I came here without any worry.

Q: What do you remember about the voyage? Did you get seasick?

A: No, I didn't get seasick as I came as a first class passenger.

Q: Did Mr. Maruoka send you the ticket for the ship?

A: Yes, of course.

Q: Did you talk to other picture brides?

A: Yes, I did, but we did not talk about personal things with people whom we just got acquainted on board the ship.

Q: Do you remember anything else about the voyage?

A: I used to look at the boundless ocean and thought about God who created it.

Q: Did they serve Japanese meals?

A: Yes, they were mostly Japanese food.

Q: What about toilets?

A: Western style toilets.

Q: You were used to them in Aoyama, weren't you?

A: In Aoyama the toilets were Japanese style, not like the white domitories. We put quilts on tatami (mats) and slept on it. I don't know how it is now.

Q: Did the ship stop at Hawaii?

A: Yes, it did. I only remember that I went to Nuuanu Pali where it was very windy. I don't remember anything else.

Side 2

Q: How did you feel when the ship approached San Francisco?

A: When I saw houses on the cliffs I thought this must be a foreign country.

Q: Were you disappointed?

A: I cannot express that feeling in words. I was filled with deep emotion. I thought this must be America, so I looked around.

Q: Did you go to Angel Island?

A: The first class passengers did not have to go there. An American lady told me that my husband was there, so I came ashore.

Q: How did you feel when you saw Mr. Maruoka for the first time?
A: I was relieved.

Q: Was Mr. Maruoka very handsome?
A: He was ordinary looking.

Q: Were you happy?
A: Yes, I was relieved. I had seen his pictures, and I knew him as he was corresponding with his brother so there was no worry. As I believed the God let me come here to meet this man, I felt at ease.

Q: Did Mr. Maruoka talk to you first?
A: Yes, he did.

Q: What did he say?
A: He said, "Welcome."

Q: What did you say?
A: I said, "I am Ryoko." Before that we have been corresponding for about a year.

Q: What did you do after that?
A: We went to a hotel. A few days later we were married at the church. Then we went to my husband's apartment.

Q: Was it in San Francisco?
A: Of course. I lived only in San Francisco since I landed here.

Q: Was he a chiropractor then?
A: No, he had just quit it when I came here. In those days many Japanese were in shoe repair business. He became an accountant of the firm which sold materials for repairing shoes. I think he did not do too godd as a chiropractor. My husband never told me but I think the white customers did not come to a Japanese chiropractor.

Q: Was Dr. Sturge at the Christ Presbyterian Church when you were married?
A: No, he wasn,t here.

Q: Was he alive?
A: Of course. I think he was in Siam then.

Q: Then your life here began. Did you have any difficulties?
A: My husband was stricken with paralysis.

Q: When was that?
A: When the war broke out, my husband was put in an internment camp, and because of hard work he was stricken with paralysis.

Q: When you began your life here what kind of difficulties did you have?

A: My husband had a job, so the life went on smoothly, and I did not have any difficulties.

Q: Did you shop at Japanese stores?

A: Yes, I did. I also went to American stores even though I could not speak English well. For a while my husband helped me.

Q: Did you cook with gas?

A: I cooked with gas, and we used a coal stove for heating.

Q: Did you get used to that kind of thing easily?

A: Yes. I thought that was the normal way of living, so it was not hard for me at all. In Japan we used water from a well, so when I could use hot and cold running water I was very thankful.

Q: What other thing did you think was good in America?

A: When I saw beautiful roads and big size of everything I thought America was a civilized country. I hear that there are good roads in Japan now, but when I was in Japan the roads were full of stones. As I was brought up by American teachers, I had an idea that America was a Christian chountry. When I came here I thought this was really a Christian country as I expected.

Q: Around the time you came here Japanese were called "Japs." Have you even been called a Jap?

A: Not directly, but at one time a friend of mine visited me with small children and we played merrily till late at night. Next morning I found an egg thrown on our window. I think our neighbor threw it because we were too noisy. After I apologized them for being too noisy they began to trust us. I have never been called a "Jap".

Q: Were other people called, "Japs"?

A: I think some people were.

Q: Did you find out that not all Americans were as good as your American teachers in your school?

A: As I had an idea that America was a Christian country, I thought it was a great country.

Q: How many children do you have?

A: I have three children.

Q: How many years after you came here was your first baby born?

A: The year after I came here. The second one was born 3 years later, and the third one 5 years later.

Q: Were they all boys?

A: The first one was a daughter, then two sons. They all work for the church.

Q: What kind of worried did you have in bringing up children?

A: I believe that if children did not go to church they would fall when they meet with hardship, so they should go to church. I sent my children to church since they were little. My daughter wrote her testimony in that pamphlet. My oldest son belongs to a Methodist church in Palo Alto, and the other son is a school teacher in San Francisco. He served as a choir leader in our church for a long time. The daughter is in San Pedro now. She wrote her testimonies in a pamphlet, and she visits people with the pamphlets.

Q: Did your husband worked for that company for a long time?

A: There were many Japanese engaged in shoe repair business.

Q: Did they have American customers, too?

A: Of course, Japanese were known as shoemakers. He was an accountant of a company which sold materials for making shoes.

Q: Was it a Japanese company?

A: All Japanese.

Q: Were your children given hard times at school?

A: I never heard them say that. Children are pure, and they don't have prejudice.

Q: What did you do during the depression?

A: Up to that time my husband did not let me work because I had children to take care of, but when the depression came I started working while the children were in school. My husband's company was dissolved, so he became an agent of California Western State Insurance Company.

Q: An insurance agent does not make much money at first, doen't he?

A: No, but he did well so he was sent everywhere by the company.

Q: It is because he can speak both English and Japanese, wasn't it?

A: Yes, that is true. He graduated from a highschool in Japan.

Q: Did many people lose jobs during the depression?

A: I think so, but I don't know much about other people.

Q: Your husband's company was not dissolved, wasn't it?

A: It was not dissolved because of depression, but it did not have much future. At one time it prospered, but gradually it declined as there was not much demand for it, so it was dissolved.

Q: How was it when you started working?

A: I went to work without telling my husband.

Q: Why didn't you tell your husband?

A: All the Japanese were working then. My husband studied chiropractic, so he did not know housework, but in some families both husband and wife worked. I did not work until the children became bigger. When I went to work, I did the same kind of work I did at home. At first I had a feeling that could not be explained by words.

Q: What do you mean by that?

A: As I had been a school teacher, I felt as if I fell from a high place. I am used to it now and I am still doing it.

Q: Did you feel sorry for yourself?

A: Yes, it was that kind of a feeling.

Q: The work wasn't hard, wasn't it?

A: It was not hard at all. I thought I didn't have to study if I was going to do that kind of work. I had all kinds of experience concerning the work. Wherever I went, the employer knew what kind of a person I was. I think I owe it to the fact that I became a Christian. I tell my children that if we believe in God we can lead our lives safely and without mistake no matter what kind of hardship we encounter in life.

Q: Did your husband work for the Japanese-American Citizens' League?

A: Yes, he did. He was not a president, but did all kinds of work.

Q: How many years older was your husband than you?

A: He was 11 years older.

Q: Did you feel he was older?

A: No, I didn't..After we are married and live together we don't think about the age.

Q: You were a picture bride but you had a good husband. Weren't there many picture brides whose husbands were no good?

A: Yes, I think so. When I was in Aoyama a white missionary gave us a talk. At that time I didn't even dream of coming to America. The missionary told us the following two stories about picture brides. One story was that when the bride came from Japan, her husband wore a cap all day long, and even when he went to bed. At one time the cap happened to come off, and the bride found out that her husband was bald headed. Another story was that a groom had a picture taken in front of his master's house and sent it to his bride-to-be saying that was his house. When the bride came here she found out that the beautiful house was not theirs but their house was a little one.

Q: Did you hear that kind of stories here?

A: No, I heard them from my teacher and still remember them.

T: Around 1920 there were less women than men, and some young women whose husbands were no good ran away from them.

M: Yes, I heard about it. I have never met them personally, but I heard that there were such people. The picture marriage was very risky. I would not have taken a chance if I didn't know him, but as he was my sister's husband's brother I knew what he was doing and I knew what kind of family he came from, so I came here without a worry.

Q: Were there many such cases?

A: I think there were many such cases.

Q: You had a good husband so you did not meet such people, didn't you?

A: No, not at all.

Q: What kind of friends did you have? Were they your Husband's friends' wives?

A: They were not picture brides. They were married in Japan before they came here.

Q: You mentioned about a friend who visited you with children. Was she a friend in your neighborhood?

A: Yes, she was one of my neighbors.

Q: Did you want to go back to Japan?

A: My parents told me to come back in 5 years, but I couldn't do anything with two small children.

Q: So you didn't go back?

A: I wanted to go back, but we could not afford to do so. I left everything to God. At that time I was glad I became a Christian. I could go back to Japan in 1939. I went back twice after that.

Q: Did you find it hard to make a living during the depresion ?

A: No, I didn't. I lead a smooth life. I am very thankful. When I was young I could go to school in Tokyo.

Q: What organizations was your husband a member of besides J.A.C.L.? Was he a member of the Heimusha-Kai?

A: He was taking care of all kinds of groups.

Q: Agents of life insurance companies used to do that: didn't they?

A: Yes. He took care of them, so he was the first one to be arrested.

Q: Was the atmosphere between Japan and America getting bad before the war?

A: Only a little. We did not think the war would break out.

Q: How did you feel when you heard that Pearl Harbor was attacked?
A: I cannot express how surprised I was.

Q: What were you doing them?
A: I was at church.

Q: Did you hear about it at church?
A: On my way home after the worship service.

Q: Weren't you surprised?
A: I never thought such a small country like Japan would attack a big country like America. Japan was ignorant. I thought Japan made a mistake.

Q: Did you think danger will come to Isseis and Niseis?
A: I did not think Americans would harm us as I was alwas pre-possed with an idea that America is a Christian nation. I knew they would protect us, but I thought maybe some bad people might harm us. I think it was better that we were evacuated, because we might have been in danger if we stayed here.

Q: When were your husband interned?
A: The day after the war broke out.

Q: Did the F.B.I. agents come to your house?

A: Yes, 3 of them did. I did not know they were F.B.I. agents so I did not let them in the house. Then they came to the back door and knocked. I asked them, "Who are you?" and "What did you come here for?". They showed me their badges and told me that they wanted to see my husband's room. I said, "Go ahead and see. He is not a spy." They went into my husband's room and took everything. As he was an insurance agent he had a lot of paper work. They put them all in a box and took them.

Q: Didn't he need them?

A: No, because he could not operate the business.

Q: Did they take your husband with them then?

A: Yes.

Q: Was he home then?

A: He was at the neighbor's, so I called him to come home as the F.B.I. agent were here. He was taken with nothing to carry but himself.

Q: Was your husband surprised?

A: I think he knew he was going to be taken.

Q: What did you do after that?

A: As my husband wasn't with me I put everything together, sold some things and went into the assembly center.

Q: Were you worried about your husband?

A: I believed they won't harm him. I just wished he would stay healthy.

Q: Were your childrne big then?

A: I think the oldest one was about 17.

Q: Did they help you?

A: Yes, they helped me. Even the boys helped me as their father was taken away. Looking back, I don't know how I packed up and left. I think everybody had to do the same. I sold my piano for almost nothing. Everything was the same way.

Q: Did you take anything to W.R.A.?

A: Yes, I did. I sold piano, table and dishes, but I kept my sewing machine and other things that I need as soon as I came back.

Q: Did you think you would come back?

A: Yes, I did. I didn't know when, but I thought I could come back.

Q: Did the members of the white churches help you?

A: They didn't come to my house, but I am sure they helped.

Q: Which assembly center did you go to?

A: We went to Tanforan.

Q: Where did you go from there?

A: Topaz.

Q: How long did you stay at Tanforan?

A: Not too long, many be a few months.

Q: How did you feel when you entered Tanforan?

A: I cannot express my feeling with words. It was a stable before. I thought we couldn't help it as the war was going on. I thought Japan had done a wrong thing. Japanese were ignorant.

Q: Were there any trouble when Japanese were gathered in a small place like Tanforan?

A: Japanese are good people. We maintained order and did nothing bad. Some kind Americans came to visit us once in a while.

Q: Did you have to stand in a line at mess hall?

A: Yes, but there was a war going on, so we couldn't help it.

Q: Could you wash clothes?

A: Yes, there was a laundry room.

Q: Was your neighbor's adjoined?

A: Our rooms were separated by a wall.

Q: Were you embarrassed?

A: They remodeled the stable, so it smelled liked horses.

Side 3

Q: Wasn't it inconvenient without your husband?

A: I depended on God's help. I was thankful I had joined the church. If I had no faith, I would have been in distress. I was strong because I believed that Jesus was with me all the time.

Q: Were there any people who thought they yould be killed?

A: I didn't think so because I know the good side of America.

Q: Did you go to Tapaz from Tanforan?

A: We were divided into 4 or 5 camps.

Q: How was Topaz?

A: It was a nice place.

Q: Was it a windy place?

A: Yes, it was windy.

Q: Did you have dust storms?

A: Yes. We were scared by rumors that it was a horrible place with many poisonous insects, but after we came here we planted trees, made gardens and made it comfortable to live in.

Q: Where were your husband then?

A: He was sent to Missouri and then to New Mexico and other places.

Q: What happened there?

A: At home my husband had never worked before. It was I who went around the house with a hammer and nails. One morning while my my husband was in an internment camp in Missouri he was given a work of shoveling coal into a truck. When he woke up from a nap that afternoon he found out that he could not move his hands. He thought it was because he worked too hard, so he rested. The next morning when he was going to get up he found out that his body was paralyzed. He was hospitalized for a month. I had my daughter write a letter directly to Washington, and they let him come home.

Q: Did you know that he was ill?

A: Because he was ill we asked the government to let him come home so that his wife and children could take care of him.

Q: Did they notify you that your husband became ill?

A: I think his friends told me.

Q: You couldn't write letters at that time, couldn't you?

A: That's right. His friends notified us. After 4 or 5 months he could walk with a cane, so he came home. A lump came into my heart when I saw him well.

Q: Did he come home 4 or 5 months after you came to the camp?

A: I think he recuperated a little less than 6 months.

Q: Did he recuperate after he came to Topaz?

A: Yes, he did. He became well.

Q: What kind of work did you do at the camp?

A: I worked as a waitress in the mess hall, and was paid $16.

Q: Did you attend any class?

A: My husband was ill, so I could not attend any class.

Q: Did he recuperate at home or at the hospital?

A: At my apartment. I had to bring food to my husband, so I could not do much work except helping the mess hall. The past is like a dream.

Q: How long did you stay in the camp?

A: Three years.

Q: Were there any extreme patriots in the camp?

A: No, there weren't any. Those radicals were sent to Tule Lake.

Q: Did anybody go from Topaz to Tule Lake?

A: No. People in Topaz were all quiet. Radicals were sent to Tule Lake from the beginning.

Q: What did you think about Niseis going to war?

A: I thought we couldn't help it. My sons were not draft age yet, but I didn't want to send them to war.

Q; Were there any families where the boys wanted to go to war, but the parents didn't want them to go?

A: Yes, there were. Those parents were troubled. I wish there will be no more war on this earth. What good ~~is it~~ does it do to kill each other. It does no good. I wish everybody will become Christians and help each other.

Q: Do you recall anything that happened in the camp?

A: Topaz was quiet. As we were put in the same place we helped and comforted each other and enjoy our lives.

Q: Were there any entertainments?

A: Yes, there were.

Q: Did your husband stay in bed all the time?

A: He could go out for a walk with a cane.

Q: Did you stay home?

A: Yes, except for going to work. The mess hall was near by. I didn't attend any class.

Q: Didn't you want to go to classes?

A: I thought my husband would be happy if I stayed home with him.

Q: Japanese women act against their own interest because they are too good to their husbands. Don't you think so?

A: I don't think so, because he was my husband, and I felt sorry for him. I didn't want to go anywhere. I only prayed that the peace will come soon.

Q: Did you husband have a hobby?

A: His hobby was fishing.

Q: Did he go fishing there?

A: No, he couldn't because he was sick. When he was healthy we didn't know which was his business, insurance or fishing.

Q: Did he gamble?

A: No, never.

Q: Did he drink?

A: Only a little,

Q: Did he become a Christian?

A: Yes, he did. As Mrs. Togasaki was such a fine person, he said he would be baptized if he could become a fine person like her. Mrs. Togasaki is a step mother of Dr. Togasaki. She was a teacher at Aoyama Gakuin for 26 years. She is living in San Jose now. Rev. Kawamorita came to our house and baptized my husband while he was recuperating.

Q: Did your husband have any hobby in the camp?

A: Only reading.

Q: Do you remember anything else about Topaz?

A: Everybody was happy around the last part as we were used to that kind of life. It became a nice town.

Q: Did you come straight back to San Francisco?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: When did you come back here?

A: Around September of that year.

Q: Where did you go to?

A: Hunter's Point where Japanese without houses lived.

Q: Did your whole family stay there?

A: Our children left camp while we were there. A son went to Brigham Young University, and our daughter went to Chicago. My husband and I and our youngest son came back here.

Q: What kind of a place was Hunter's Point?

A: We stayed in a hall, and some people stayed in cottages.

Q: How long did you stay there?

A: I think we stayed there for about a year. We wanted to leave there soon, so we made arrangements and moved to an apartment in San Francisco.

Q: What about the income?

A: I started working.

Q: Your husband couldn't work, couldn't he?

A: No. We withdrew our savings. Then I started to work.

Q: What did you do at Hunter's Point?

A: I couldn't work as it was it was too far.

Q: Did you have any income while you were at Hunter's Point?

A: I think the government gave us money. We had church meetings there, and pastors came out in turn.

Q: Who were the pastors?

A: Rev. Nishimura, Rev. Ozaki and other pastors came in turn.

Q: How many people were there?

A: There were many?

Q: About how many families?

A: I don't know how many.

Q: About 20 families?

A: Of course more. Most everybody from Topaz went there.

Q: Then hundreds of families?

A: That's right.

Q: Couldn't you work then?

A: I was too far, and also it was still dangerous to come to town, so we stayed there until everything was quieted down.

Q; Did you look for an apartment after that?

A: Yes.

Q: Then you had to make your own living, didn't you?

A: Yes, we had to.

Q: What kind of work did you do?

A: I did housework.

Q: Did you work all day?

A: As my husband was sick at home I could work only about half a day.

Q: Was it hard?

A: I had to make a living, so I didn't feel hard. I didn't want to ask for help. For the first time in my life I had to count the money in my purse to see what I could buy that day. When I was young I had a carefree life, but after the war I had such an experience.

Q: How long did that kind of life continue?

A: For about 3 to 4 years while my husband was recuperating.

Q: Could you live on half a day's pay?

A: We had some saving, so we withdrew it a little at a time.

Q: It must have been hard?

A: Yes, it was hard. My husband was in bed for about 4 years, and we made a scanty living, but I could send my husband off to Heaven without being needy.

Q: Did your husband stay in bed all the time after you came back?

A: He could walk a little, but in the fourth year he could not walk at all.

Q: Couldn't he work at all?

A: No, he couldn't. That period was the lowest time of my life, but Jesus protected me. I never had a day when I didn't have anything to eat. Everybody at church was kind to me. I was very thankful. I told my husband that he should be thankful for his illness. He asked, "Why should I be thankful when I am sick?" I replied, "You don't have illness that is painful, nor we have to worry about operations. If you rest quietly you don't have any pain, so I am thankful." He did not say anything.

T: As a man I think he wanted to go out and work.

M: That's right. He died young. He was 64 years old then.

Q: He didn't work for the last 6 to 7 years?

A: No, not at all.

Q: Did you go back to Japan after that?

A: The path was opeened after my husband died, so I went back to Japan 3 times.

Q: When did you go back to Japan first?

A: In 1959.

Q: How was it when you went back?

A: It was like a dream.

Q: Japan was much stbilized by then, wasn't she?

A: Yes.

Q: How were your parents?

A: My mother had died 3 years before then.

Q: What about your father?

A: Of course he was not alive.

Q: Were your brothers and sisters there?

A: I met them.

Q: Were you happy to see them?

A: I was very happy. I went back to Japan 2 years later, and again after 2 more years.

Q: Did you work half a day until your husband died?

A: I worked half a day. After my husband died, I lived in a white family by Mrs. Togasaki's advise. This is how it came about.

After my husband died Mrs. Togasaki knew that I didn't have money, so she told me to live in a rich white family south of San Mateo for a while and save some money. I didn't want to live in a white family then.

Four days later I received a phonecall from Mrs. Kasai, a friend of mine at church telling me that a millionaire in Atherton wants a Japanese woman to work at his house. She asked me if I wanted to work there as she could recommend me. I said I didn't know if I could work there or not as I could not speak English well and could not cook. I asked her to recommend another lady who was a widow. Mrs. Kasai said she called me because she trusted me, and she could recommend me. I told her that I would think it over.

When I thought about it I felt that it was God's plan that Mrs. Togasaki told me to work in a white family, and then 4 days later I received a phonecall from Mrs. Kasai. The following day I called the millionaire and told him that I would try. My son took me there. The house was in a large lot about 3 acres. While my son was talking with the master in the parlour, I became scared and told my son that I wanted to go home as I could not work in such a house. The master told me to try. When I thought quietly I thought it might be God's will, so I told my son in

Japanese that I will try for a week. When Frank told that to the master, he said that would be all right. I took my luggage with me, so I stayed there. I stayed there for 2 to 3 years, and they trusted me. They were nice people, I think it was all God's plan.

As I saved some money there I wanted to go back to Japan. At that time $700 came from the Social Security office. I thought God gave me the money to travel, so I made arrangements. The master helped me pay about one third of the passage .

When I came back from Japan I did not want to work at the millionaire's house in the country. In the meantime, a friend of the millionaire who was the president of the American President Line wanted me to work at his house in San Francisco, so I worked there. As he was the president of a ship company, he let me go to Japan. Two years later he asked me if I wanted to go to Japan, so I said I did, and he let me go back to Japan again. He let me go back to Japan twice free. I am still working there. When I became 75 years old I wrote a letter to the master wanting to retire. He wanted me to work even for half the time, so I am working there 3 times a week for 2 hours a day.

Q: What kind of work did you do when you were working full time?
A: I did everything.

Q: How many people are there in the family?
A: Just the husband and wife. They live on Chestnut Street now. He was an ambassador after he retired from the A.P.L.

Q: When you lived in the family did you work from morning till night?

A: Yes.

Q: How many hours did you work?

A: I worked from about 9 o'clock in the morning till about 2 to 4 in the afternoon. Sometimes I stayed later when I served dinner.

Q; Didn't you serve dinner every night?

A: Rich people do not eat at home every night.

Q: Didn't you live in?

A: No, I commuted frmm here. I lived in the house in Atherton.

Q: What time did you start working when you worked at Atherton?

A: I had to prepare breakfast, so I got up at 7 o'clock.

Q: Did you clean the house after serving breakfast?

A: Yes. There is an spisode. At one time Mrs. Togasaki came to see what kind of a place I was working. My master told her that I was not good at cleaning house, but I am warm-hearted and is kind to everyone in the family. It was a large mansion.

Q: How many people were there in the family?

A: Husband and wife, a son and a daughter. When I was young I went to school and became a teacher. My life was heavenly. Since my husband died I had all kinds of experience, but I am thankful that everything was God's plan.

Q: Most people had hardships such as working in the field right after they came here, but your case was backwards, wasn't it?

A: That's right. It was as if I fell to the ground after the war. Looking back now, I think everything was God's plan. I am grateful that I was brought up as a Christian since I was young.

Q: As an Issei with long experience, what kind of thing do you want to teach young people?

A: I want to tell them in loud voice to believe in Christ, and let them know that everything is in God's plan. And if they believe in God and walk with God they will have no trouble. When I was in Atherton I heard God's voice. I wrote about my experience in Atherton in "Maboroshi No Keiji". I heard someone singing a hymn, and I turned around to see who was singing. It must have been the work of the Holy Ghost. I want young men to go to church and follow Jesus till death.

Q: What kind of effort do you think is important in everyday life besides faith?

A: The direction for life is written in the Bible, so we should do what the Bible tells us to do.

Q: What other thing did you keep in mind?

A: While I was working at the white family I tried to do to others what I wanted them to do, and also try to do little jobs well instead of doing big jobs. One lady gave me a nice letter of recommendation. I think she knew I worked with a Christian spirit.

Q: In Japan they say that it is good for a person to struggle with adversity. Do you agree with it?

A: Yes, that's right. If a person never struggled with adversity he does not have sympathy nor love towards others. I am always glad that I became a Christian.

Q: Sanseis and Yonseis are becoming aware of their Japanese heritage now. Do you think that is a good thing?

A: Yes, I want them to have Japanese spirit such as human sympathy. I think Chinese has such spirit.

T: Must be Confucius teaching.

M: That's right. I think we learned it from Chinese. Orientals have the spirit of human sympathy. Japanese should try to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

Q: When you came here your husband had good education, but weren't there many people who didn't have any education?

A: Yes, that's true. I felt sorry for some people who missed the opportunities to go to school. Not many people could read and write as they did not have education.

Q: Did those people had rough life like gambling?

A: It was not unusual for single men to gamble. We didn't have such friends so I don't know them.

Q: Were there gambling houses, restaurants and brotherls?

A: Yes, there were. Uneducated sigle men went to those places, but those with families did not go to such places. There are no such places now.

Q; Were there Chinese gambling houses around here?

A: I heard there were long time ago. I think many Japanese went there.

Q: Did you learn about Ninomiya Sontoku at school?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: About what other people did you learn at grammar school? Did you learn about Saigo Takamori?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Who were the heroes when you were in grammar school?

A: We used to hear the story about Ninomiya Sontoku when we were gathered in a hall.

Q: Do you remember anybody else?

A: We heard a story about the wife of Taki Kakudai, and also about a dutiful son. After I went to Aoyama we studied Bible. We did not study ethics. That was bad.

Q: Was it good that you learned ethics?

A: Ethics was a good subject to learn.

Q: What other stories you remember studying in ethics?

A: The story of the hare and the tortoise. It is not a fable, it is a moral lesson.

Q: Did you read about Katsu Kaishu?

A: I didn't know about him then.

Q: Were the stories of the people of the Meiji Restoration in the ethics?

A: I read about Admiral Togo and General Nogi.

T: My grandfather was a bodyguard of General Nogi. When Emperor Meiji died Gen. Nogi committed hara-kiri. As my grandfather did not have anybody to guard, he came back to Kagoshima.

Q: What was the religion of your father?

A: He was a good educator, but not a devout Buddhist. Not many parents sent their children to Tokyo to study in those days. I think there was a household Buddhist shrine in our house.

Q: Was your father a principal since he was in Niigata?

A: He was an assistant principal in Niigata, but he was a principal of girls' highschools in Oita and Miyazaki. He was a teacher of natural history.

Q: What subject did you like best in school?

A: I liked music best. When evangelist Kimura Suematsu came, I used to sing in the quartet before the meeting. I sang alto.

Q: Were the white people kind to you?

A: They were all kind to me.

Q: Were you ever given a hard time by them?

A: Never. One lady gave me a nice letter of recommendation. Every one was nice to me.

Q: Have you ever been homesick?

A: No, I have never been homesick.

Q: Did you say parting was hard?

A: It was very hard.

Q: But you never been homesick?

A: I never had a chance to become homesick as I had to raise my children. Christians do not become homesick because we believe that Jesus will protect us.

Q: What did you do when your children were going to get married? Did they find their spouse or did you help them ?

A: I told them not to marry anybody who does not know Jesus.

Q: Did they obey you?

A: Yes, they all did. My daughter writes testimonies now. Frank and his wife are active in a church in Palo Alto. My son who teaches school here married a Catholic girl, but she knows the church so she is o.k.

Q: Did they all marry Japanese?

A: Only the Catholic girl is an American.

Q: What did you think about the marriage with a white girl?

A: A Japanese girl would have been better, but after they got married I said that's all right because it was God's will.

Q: Do they have 4 children?

A: Yes they do. She is a very nice girl. They met each other at school.

Q: Do you draw pictures?

A: Yes, I like to draw. When I was in Atherton I was lonely. There were many flowers around, so I picked them and sketched them at my spare time. I cannot draw now. It was my hobby.

Q: It was good that your son married a nice American girl, wasn't it?

A: She is a devout Christians. They bought a weekend cottage in Sonoma and attend a church there.

Q: Have you bought a house here?

A: Our children did, but we didn't. My husband wanted to buy a house before the war, but I was against it because I didn't want to settle down here, so we didn't buy a house.

Q: Did you acquire American citizenship?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: When?

A: When I worked at an American home I was asked if I had American citizenship, so I answered I didn't. Then I was told I should, so I acquiered it within two weeks.

Q: When did you decide to settle down here?

A: After my husband died.

Q: Did you intend to go back to Japan before then?

A: Yes, that is why I was against buying a house. That was about the only time I opposed my husband, He was a gentle Christian.

Q: How did you find out about the evacuation when the war broke out?

A: The evacuation order was published in the paper. We didn't know where we would be sent to, but we guessed that Japanese on the coastal region would be sent to the interior.

Q: How did you feel then?

A: We were told to take just enough to carry, so I let each child carry his share. We store whatever we could at WRA, sold the rest, and left home almost empty.

Q: You took a big loss, didn't you?

A: It was a big loss. I think we sold the piano for $50. Some people left the piano in the middle of the street. A black man came and bought my piano fir $50.

Q: Did you get back everything you stored in W.R.A. warehouse?

A: Yes, of carse. Only my husband's desk which had some important things in it did not come back. The rest of them all came back. W.R.A. took good care of our stuff, and delivered them to our house. Americans were nice to enemy aliens.

Q: Some people say that it was America's mistake to have put Niseis who were American citizens in camps. What do you think about it?

A: It was war, so I thought we could not help it.

Q: Was anybody killed around here?

A: I never heard it.

T: There were some in Sacramento.

M: I didn't hear such case in San Francisco.

Q: Were there churches in the camp?

A: Yes, there were.

Q: Was it good to have churches?

A: Of course. We were all in a camp together, so we helped and encouraged each other. The atmosphere was good.

Q: Do you think it was good for your Christian life?

A: Some people became Christians there. Christians held meetings often. They were good.

Q: Do you look back upon your past often?

A: Looking back at past 80 years, I think everything was God's plan, so I have nothing to regret. I am just thankful.

Q: Are you glad you came to America?

A: I think it was God's plan. I attended Aoyama and knew Americans, so I think that was God's plan.

T: I think it was hard for Isseis to get used to different surroundoings.

M: Yes, Isseis were great. At the time of evacuation my husband was taken away leaving three children with me, and I had to put everything in the big house together. I was in dismay.

Q: How many bed-rooms did you have then?

A: It was a big house with 3 bed-rooms, parlor, living-room and a big kitchen.

Q: Were you renting the house?

A: Yes, we were.

Q: Was it a 2-storied house?

A: Yes. I don't know how I packed and left. Everybody took a loss. When we left, the owner of the house and neighbors said good-bye to us. War is wrong. I wish there will be no more war in this world. We do not gain anything by sacrificing lives.

Q: Did you know Mr. Osuke Takizawa.

A: He worked hard for the church.

Q: Was Mrs. Togasaki your friend?

A: She was an instructor of Japanese language at the University of California for a long time after the war.

Q: What kind of a person was she?

A: She graduated from the English department of Aoyama Gakuin, and taught there for 26 years. She married Mr. Kikumatsu Togasaki. After the was she taught Japanese language at U.C. Berkeley.

Q: How did she come to America?

A: After Mr. Togasaki's first wife died he went to Japan looking for his second wife. She liked Mr. Togasaki for his deep knowlege of Bible and married him when she was 41 years old.

Q: She married quite late, didn't she?

A: Yes, very late. She did not have any intention of getting married. When she had a marriage proposal, she introduced my friend to that man. It is hard to find such a fine person.

Q: Did she have any children?

A: Only one son who works at IBM in San Jose now.

Q: I hear much about Dr. Kazue Togasaki. There are many people in Sacramento who were helped by Dr. Togasaki. There were not many woman doctors in those days, weren't there?

A: No, there weren't . She is single, too. There are a few girls in that family but only one or two were married. Their mother died, and Tsugi Togasaki became their step mother. She had a strong faith. I would liked to have introduced her to you if she is not in her dotage. I am thankful that I have such a good friend.